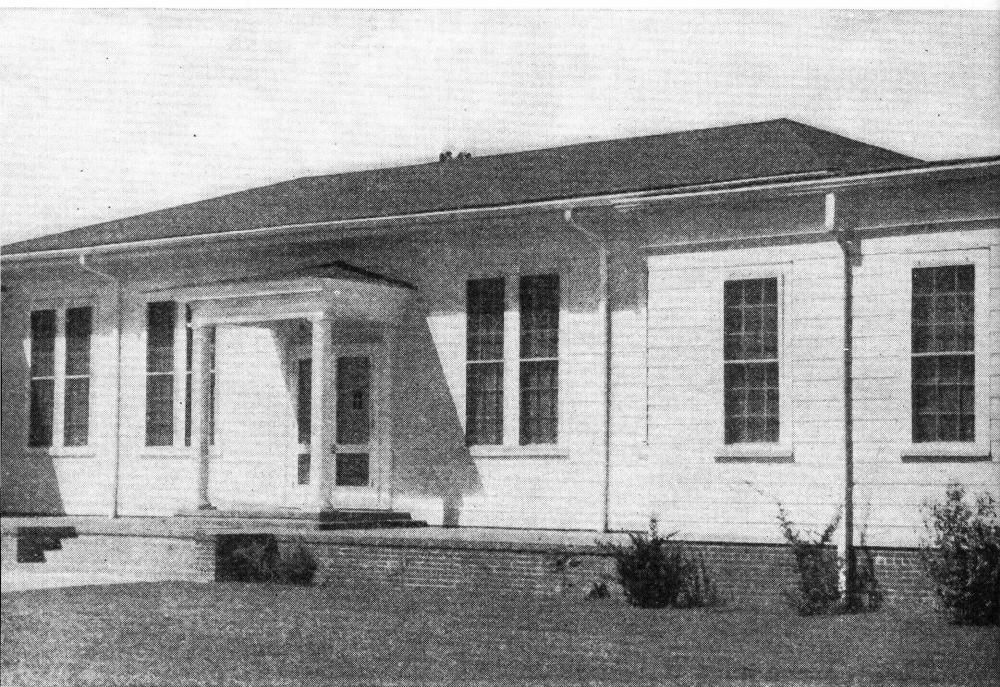
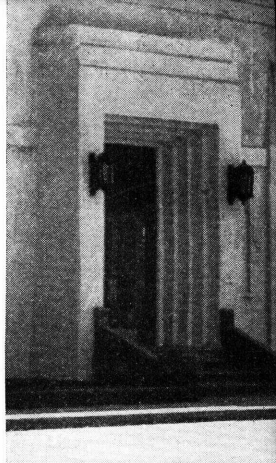


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# COMMUNITY BUILDINGS FOR FARM FAMILIES



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE

FARMERS' BULLETIN No. 1804

**C**OMMUNITY BUILDINGS have been built by a few rural communities to house the activities of their organizations. Some communities have rooms in stores or in school buildings; occasionally they have a borrowed building. But many have no space at all. A country community particularly needs a community building, for families are more scattered there than in a city, and it needs organizations and planned meetings for social and recreational purposes and for the discussion of community affairs.

The purpose of this bulletin is to acquaint rural communities that need these buildings with successful building programs in other places, so they may profit by the experiences of others. Each community must define its own needs before it builds, but knowing about the financing, the cost, and the planning of other buildings will be helpful. The type and design of a structure, room sizes, room uses, materials, and equipment, may suggest new arrangements, new uses, and economies.

Because the community building houses the activities of the people, it becomes a definite part of the community plan, for the location and lay-out of school buildings and churches, the location of the services that people need in everyday life, the parks, and the roads, affect both the location and the uses of a community house. If there is already satisfactory space for some of the activities, it is uneconomical to plan additional space. Duplication is costly and reveals a lack of planning. Planning for one activity always means taking into consideration the others.

A recent trend in community-building planning is the many-use building that is designed for business, civic, social, recreational, and sometimes educational activities—all under one roof. Such an arrangement has many advantages. There are more contacts between groups. There is economy in using rooms and equipment for many purposes. More people have an interest in the building. It can become the outstanding building in the community in beauty of design and in its multitude of uses.

The value of the community building is greater than the housing of a community's activities. From the very beginning, the problems of its financing, its planning, its construction become the people's project and bring many groups together, working for the same purpose—for the good of a community.

This bulletin supersedes Farmers' Bulletin 1173, Plans of Rural Community Buildings. It brings together the experience of recent projects in the development of community-building programs.

# COMMUNITY BUILDINGS FOR FARM FAMILIES

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## CONTENTS

	Page		Page
The community building is part of the community plan.....	1	The cost.....	31
New ways of life affect the location and uses of a community building.....	3	Who pays the cost?.....	31
When should a neighborhood build a community building?.....	3	Location of the building and size and type of building site.....	32
Some community buildings are unsatisfactory.....	4	Architectural design.....	34
Building uses.....	6	Considerations in planning.....	35
The many-use building.....	7	The rooms.....	35
The special-use building.....	10	Fire-protection and building-code regulations.....	36
Inexpensive buildings.....	28	Remodeling old buildings.....	37
What type of building does a community need?.....	30	The furnishings.....	38
		Administration and management.....	40

## THE COMMUNITY BUILDING IS PART OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

A COMMUNITY is built to live in. Some communities are good living places, for the people in them plan them as such. A well-planned community is designed for all the needs of all the people and for the future as well as the present. Usually, community planning is continuous planning, for conditions change and people move. The activities that go on within a community—the business and civic, the educational, the social and recreational—are so closely interwoven that planning for one activity means planning for others.

If a new school building is to be built, its gymnasium or auditorium, its library, its clubroom and kitchen, if these are included, and even its classrooms may be used for many outside community activities. A church may also be planned for some of these same uses. A new community building may duplicate the work of these other buildings.

The parks, the roads, and the location of the services that people need in every-day life help to determine the locations of community buildings and some of their uses. To be conveniently located, any new public building must fit into the general scheme of planning.

The community building—the meeting place for many of the activities of the people—is a definite part of community planning that should be considered along with it. In some small communities the community building has become the center of all social and recreational and many business activities—the actual hub of the wheel. Like the community, it should be planned for the future. Usually, people gather together for business and social reasons. They want to carry on their business better. They like friendly visiting. They want to have a good time. Although in many places community houses are built for a single use, the community building is becoming more and more a place with many uses (fig. 1), flexible enough to meet the needs of changing modes of life.



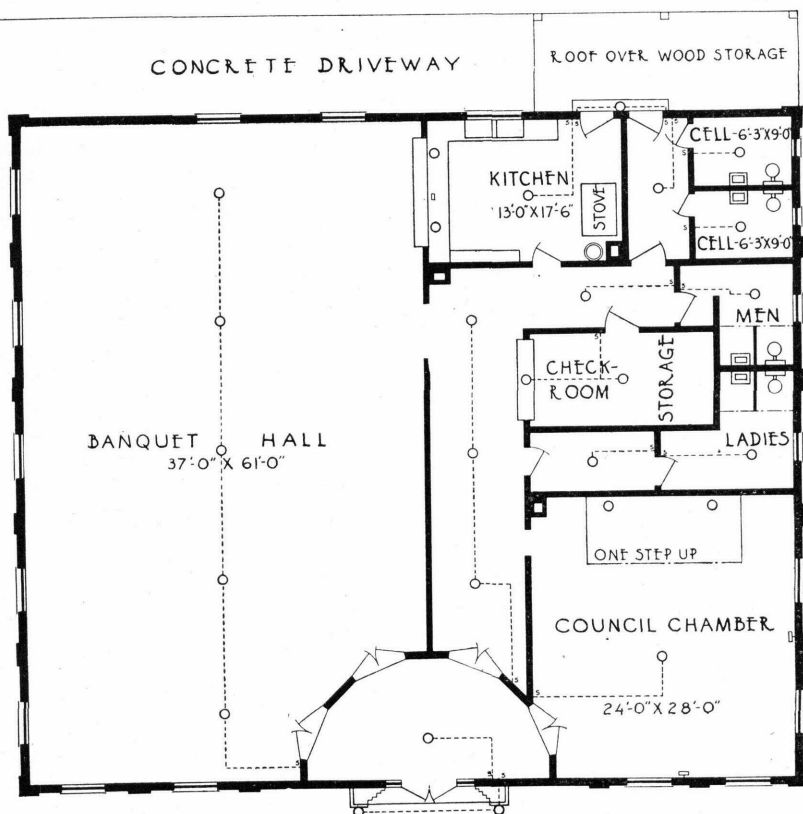
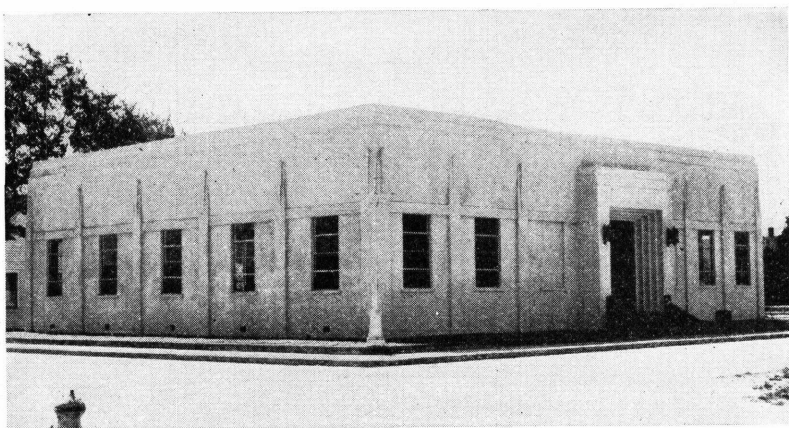


FIGURE 1.—The Stanwood, Wash., community hall that serves a town of 700 people and a large agricultural community is an example of a many-use building featuring a town council room. The assembly hall with stage is designed for meetings, theatricals, and other social uses. This building, which cost about \$18,000, was financed by the people of Stanwood and the Works Progress Administration.

A community that establishes a community house has the responsibility of building for the satisfaction and pleasure of its own community, but it should also build one that is good enough to be imitated; for communities very often reproduce the buildings seen in other localities. Although all the details of the plan may not serve a second neighborhood, a faulty plan and ugly design will not serve adequately any neighborhood.

#### NEW WAYS OF LIFE AFFECT THE LOCATION AND USES OF A COMMUNITY BUILDING

New trends and new ways of life in country neighborhoods are demanding new locations and new uses for community buildings. Automobiles and hard-surface roads have made neighborhoods larger. Neighborhood boundary lines have broken down, have been pushed outward. Many an old neighborhood with its county crossroads and surrounding open country now includes the nearest village or the one where most of the services are obtained. These once open-country neighborhoods have become farm-family and village-family neighborhoods. In these places new and easy travel has changed the location of the community building from the open country to the village. It has increased the activities that go on within it, for village and farm community organizations have many common interests.

Other changes are going on in many country neighborhoods. Kinship ties are not as responsible for neighborhood boundary lines as they once were. There are fewer church-parish neighborhoods now, although they still exist in some places. The township does not determine the neighborhood to the extent that it did in the past.

Many neighborhoods are now determined by trade locations, particularly if this trade location contains the school. In the more thickly populated areas the tendency is toward the village and open-country neighborhood. When the density of farm population increases—when families move into a community—social conditions change, and the community center takes on new activities.

These new trends in neighborhood sizes are important considerations in planning for the location and use of community buildings, for when a building is once located and built it usually remains for a long time.

#### WHEN SHOULD A NEIGHBORHOOD BUILD A COMMUNITY BUILDING?

Each community must decide for itself when it needs a community building and the advantages this building will bring. There are always problems of changing conditions, of people moving, of the breaking down of organizations. There are no established rules that will help a neighborhood to decide whether a community building will be continuously and successfully used after it is built.

But community buildings are used chiefly by organizations, and such trends in organizations as the following will affect the success of the enterprise: (1) The longer a club is organized the more likely it is to continue or to have some other organization take its place. (2) There are more clubs and organizations in densely populated

rural communities than in others. (3) Organizations are more stable when they have a diversity of activities. (4) They last longer when they have competent leaders. (5) They continue for a longer period when they are not in large towns.

The many-use building—the one designed for a number of organizations—has a better chance for success if it is well arranged (fig. 2)

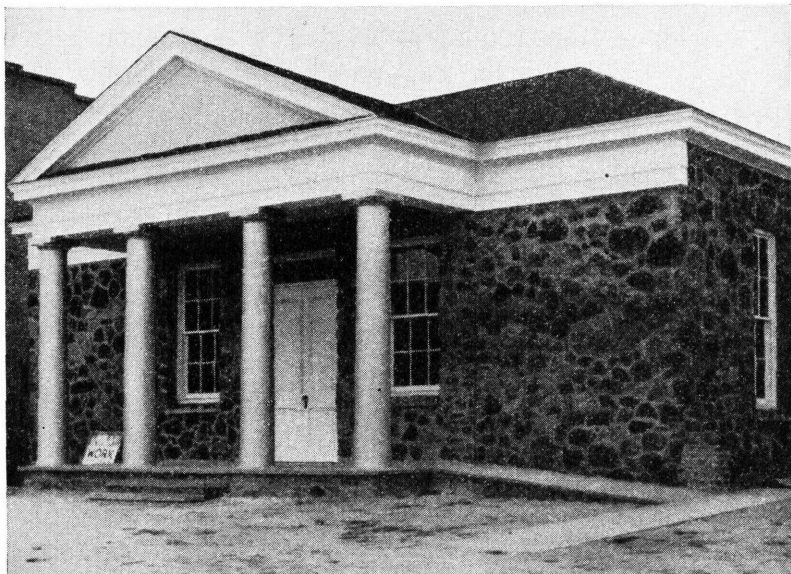


FIGURE 2.—The community center at Warm Springs, Ga., is an example of a many-use building of attractive architectural design achieved with stone construction. This building cost about \$12,000. It includes a large auditorium with stage, a kitchen, the library, the city clerk's office, and a club room.

than the one used for one or two activities, for if one organization fails there are others to continue.

#### SOME COMMUNITY BUILDINGS ARE UNSATISFACTORY

Many buildings have been abandoned or have been taken over for activities for which they were not designed. The chief reasons for these failures were: (1) A definite lack of leadership in the community, (2) too many factions in the community, (3) difficulties over the control of the building—particularly when buildings are managed by the older members of a community and new members wish to take part in the activities, (4) disagreement over uses of the building, and (5) unsuccessful planning.

In one community a new \$15,000 building was recently constructed and given to the community by a civic-minded citizen. Because of factions, it is used very little. Here is an example of the consequences of poor organization work.

Another community reports a \$185,000 building which was a gift to a small community with less than 1,000 people. This building, according to the report, is not successful, because it is controlled by the "wrong people" for the best use. The report continues:

It is practically a white elephant in the hands of the community, and is always in the red. Under the present set-up it is not used sufficiently. . . . If we were to remodel it I would suggest that it be made more suitable for the needs of the people and be administered by strong organizations that would have some use for it and would have an interest in seeing that the building was used and kept up. At the present time anyone who uses the building pays a fee for its use. It is not used very much, and these fees do not meet the cost of maintenance.

In another small place, a community center had been in operation for 15 years. When the public-school auditorium and gymnasium were built, these seemed to serve the purpose better than the space in the community center, part of which was later turned over to the school for a library. The auditorium in the center is still rented for public functions.

It is important that community buildings be made adaptable for many activities, as they must often be put to unexpected uses. For instance, one building that was designed chiefly for home-bureau meetings and 4-H Club work was used for the Union Sunday School at one time, at another time for music classes, on different occasions for dancing schools, and it has met other needs.

Community buildings seem to be unsatisfactory partly because of failure to plan for all the present uses of the building and for probable future needs. But the dissatisfaction may also be due in part to unsuccessful organization and administration.

One neighborhood that built a community house in 1933 discovered in less than 2 years that the building was too small. Now an addition is being considered. If the original plan is such that this addition can be inexpensively and easily made without interfering with the convenience of the plan or unity of the design, the remodeling will probably be satisfactory. But many buildings are not so planned as to lend themselves readily to remodeling.

In some fairly new buildings no arrangement has been made for food service—adequate kitchen and dining space. After a few months such facilities have been considered essential, and adding them has cost more than if they had been included in the beginning.

In a sparsely settled locality a community building that has been operating for about 10 years includes an auditorium 32 by 40 feet but no stage. As the building cost but \$2,450, this omission may have been considered an economy. Now the auditorium needs to be considerably enlarged, and a stage is desirable.

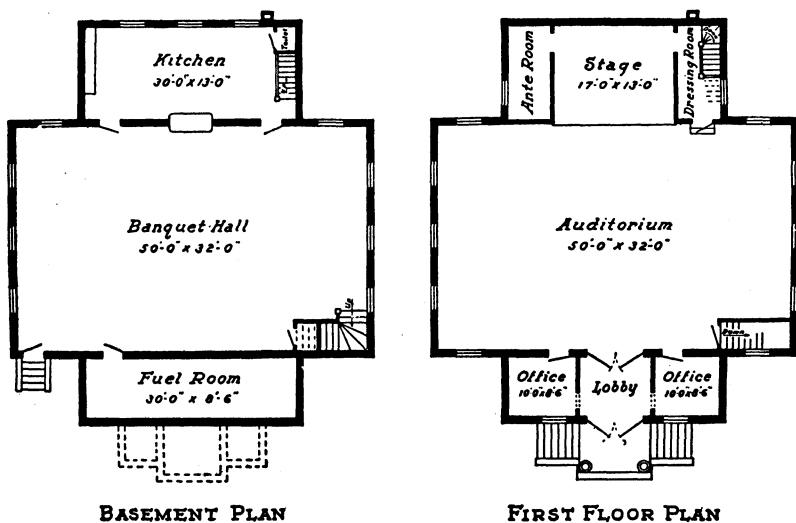
In another community where a building costing more than \$100,000 was erected, heat was provided for in only part of the space. Heating for the rest of the building is to be added later at unusual expense.

In some instances it is not easy to foresee future uses and future additions, and remodeling is unexpected. For instance, a community house in a Southern State was planned as an outgrowth of a community church. Shortly after the building was completed a folk-school program was developed that required considerable space. The work of this folk school is believed to be so vital that major remodeling, or the erection of an entirely new building, appears necessary.

A few community buildings have been abandoned or bought by individuals for commercial purposes. Others have been donated to schools or used for other public activities.

On the other hand, many community buildings that have been used for 25 or 30 years are reported to be satisfactory for present-day needs. A community house built in Wilder, Vt., in 1899, is reported still satisfactory in plan. Except for having poor acoustics, it seems to meet present-day requirements. Wilder is a town of about 1,100 people, and the building is used by the Grange, social clubs, 4-H clubs, and home-demonstration groups. It has a library, space for social functions, bowling alleys, pool tables, and a swimming pool. The auditorium and the library are on the first floor. There is space for other activities in the basement which is the ground floor. This building cost \$12,000 when built, and the financing was accomplished through individual donations. This is a special type of building which might not serve every community unless other buildings were available for other group activities.

The community house at Como, Wis., a township building erected in 1917 and located 5 miles from a town, is reported to be satisfactory for present use. With the exception of a new furnace, redecoration of the basement, and painting, no improvements have been made since it was built. This building is used chiefly by farmers' organizations (fig. 3).



**BASEMENT PLAN**

**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**

FIGURE 3.—Plans of the community building at Como, Wis. This building, erected 20 years ago, is reported as meeting satisfactorily present needs.

#### BUILDING USES

Before a community plans a building it will need to know the purposes for which it is to be used. These uses will differ in each community, for the number and types of organizations differ, and the number of satisfactory rooms or buildings in existence that are already in use for community purposes will affect the functions of the new building. In some small places community buildings are planned to provide for almost all the social, recreational, civic, and some of the business activities of the community. In many other



places such buildings are designed mainly for some special group purpose but are frequently used by other groups and for other purposes. The most common of these special groups which have their own buildings are schools, libraries, churches, Granges, 4-H Clubs, home-demonstration clubs, and home bureaus.

#### THE MANY-USE BUILDING

Community buildings designed for many purposes, providing for a number of activities under one roof, are increasing in number. Many communities seem to prefer a single building for many activities to small buildings or rooms. It is more economical also to build one large building than a number of small ones. There is a saving in auditorium and stage space, in kitchen and dining space, in heating, plumbing, and much of the service space; for several groups may use the same spaces and services. There is a saving in construction of the roof and the foundation as well as in the building site. In most instances the structure is a better one than any one of a number of separate buildings would be.

The many-purpose building brings a number of groups together. It can be made the most serviceable and outstanding building in the whole community. It can be an example of good architectural design, attractive placement, and convenience. Native materials can be used attractively, and they are usually cheaper than others (fig. 4). As the building is used by most of the people, it becomes the people's building. Each community, however, must decide for itself the activities that it can house under one roof.

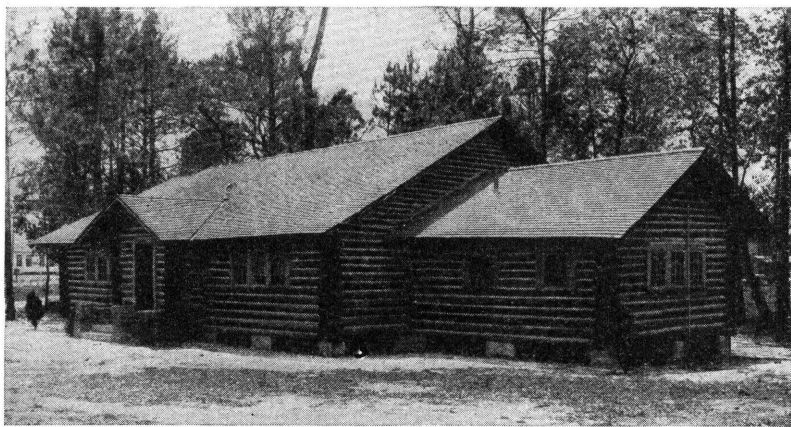


FIGURE 4.—The many-use community building in Calhoun County, Fla. With log construction and pier foundation, costs need not be high.

Pittsville, Wis., a community of 500 people, has a large surrounding farm population. A many-use community building has just been built there that provides a meeting place for the city council and the space needed for records, a suitable stage and rooms for dramatics, a motion-picture projection booth, rooms for discussion purposes, space for athletics and social functions of various types, and

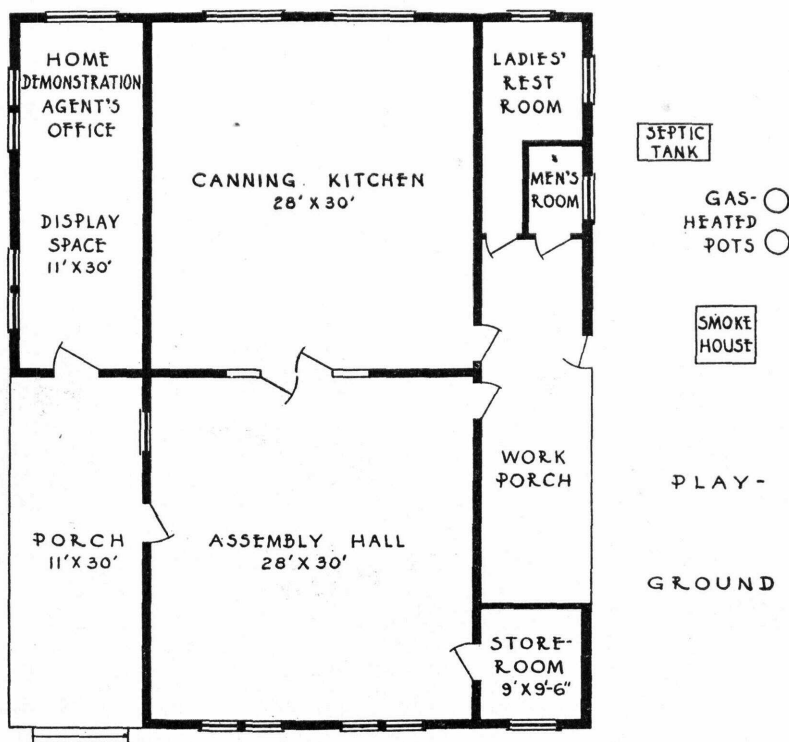
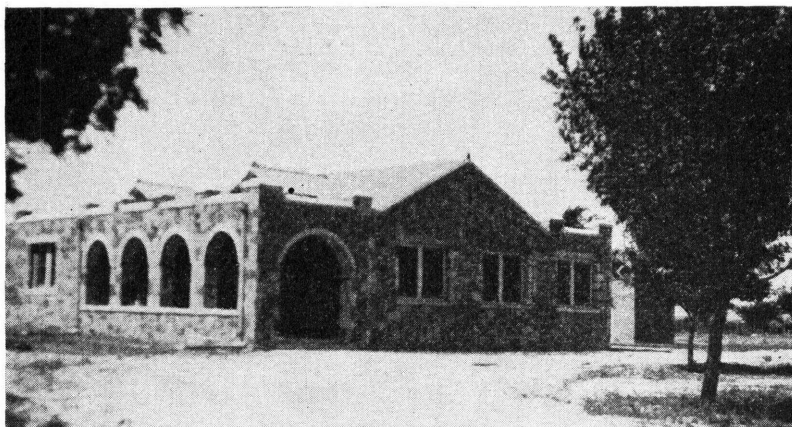


FIGURE 5.—The Fort Stockton community building, Pecos County, Tex., was built of local stone at a cost of \$10,000. The site was donated. Office space for the home demonstration agent, the assembly hall, the canning kitchen, work porch, and storage room provide generous work areas and space for social activities. On the grounds are the smokehouse and gas-heated pots for soap making and lard rendering. Space is set aside for a 5-acre playground.

rest rooms. It is used both for high-school athletics and for the adults in the community. Space and equipment for serving food were unfortunately omitted. This building of brick and hollow tile with overall dimensions 55 by 115 feet cost about \$30,000.



Stanwood, Wash., a little town located in the heart of an agricultural district, has recently built a town hall-community building. This was the dream of a civic-minded mayor and the result of many years of planning. In this attractive building, an example of excellent architectural design, is the city council room, to be used also for social functions, as well as the large assembly room. In a back corner is the city jail. The combination of business and social activities housed in a well-designed, well-located building can make it of first importance in the community, and its many uses may well justify its cost (fig. 1).

Other types of country communities combine other activities for the many-use building. At Fort Stockton, Pecos County, Tex., a community building has been designed to serve as a meeting place for country people and for a work center. It is owned and controlled by the county court, but it is under the supervision of the county home demonstration agent. This building is most successful as a community center and meeting place for farm men and women. The county agent says the building is complete in every respect and no additions are necessary (fig. 5).

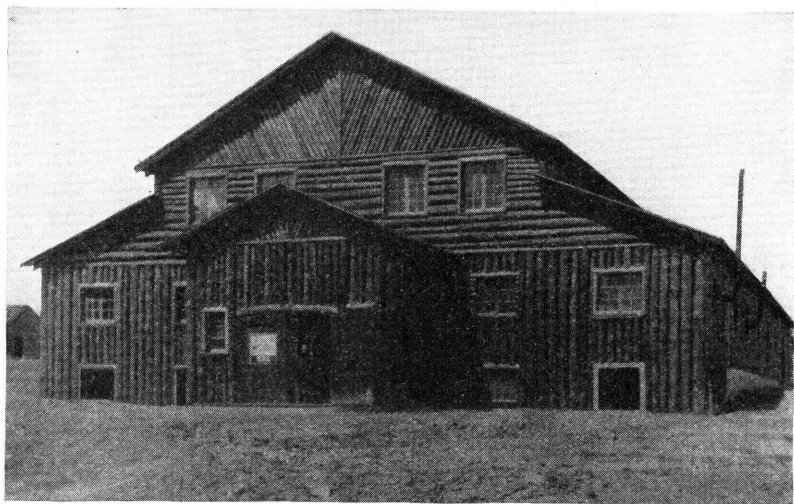


FIGURE 6.—The community building at Rose City, Mich., is a good example of the perpendicular use of cedar logs.

Some of the many-use buildings in small towns have under one roof the village board room, space for the justice court, the public library, and clubrooms for recreational and social activities. Such a building was recently built in Ellsworth, Wis., a town of about 1,100 people. This building was completed only 4 years ago, but its space is now reported to be insufficient.

In Rose City, Mich., a little town of 338 people, an attractive cedar-log community house designed for many uses has just been completed. This building provides for farm meetings, home-economics groups, athletics, dramatics, moving pictures, and many social functions. It has a city council room, a library, an auditorium 48 by 72 feet, and a stage. A dining room 30 by 48 feet and an adjoining kitchen, provide for food service for the many groups (fig. 6).

It is not always necessary to build large, costly structures for many-use buildings, because many inexpensive ones, and sometimes very small ones, can be successful.

Darlington, Fla., is a small village in a farming country. Here a community house was built in 1935 for only \$1,500. The lot and some of the materials were donated. A great many activities have been provided for with this small amount of money. This simply designed log house is used by the women's clubs, the boys' and the girls' 4-H Clubs, the health clinic, and for community sings, prayer meetings, a great many social activities, and even for weddings. The county agent says: "It fills all the needs of the community."

The Whiteside community house, in Lincoln County, Mo., a little log house in a community of 200 people, was sponsored by a club of only 10 members. This building serves as a meeting place for the town board, civic groups, church and school organizations, the home economics club and for community sings, holiday festivities, and other social meetings. It has a library that is open 2 days each week. The cash outlay was only \$205 with but \$85 for materials and \$120 for labor. Other materials and labor, valued at about \$200, were donated.

Replies from a group of rural leaders in Illinois (Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station, Circular 470, Rural Community Buildings) suggest that community buildings in that State are used or are needed for—

social functions, extension work, plays and entertainments, recreation and athletics, demonstrations, church functions, exhibits, community fairs, carnivals, and part-time adult education classes. They may contain reading rooms and libraries, nursery rooms, and hospital units. They may be used for mass meetings and elections and may contain office rooms for town officers.

A many-purpose building takes on new uses as a community changes, and new activities take a leading part in community affairs. The radio, for instance, has greatly increased the use of the community building by young people. The use of such buildings for drama, music, and hobbies has been increasing, and in the many-use building a wide variety of educational, social, and recreational activities goes on.

#### THE SPECIAL-USE BUILDING

Many communities do not have multiple-use buildings. If they have any at all that can be used for community activities, they are usually those designed for special groups such as schools, churches, Granges, libraries, 4-H Clubs, typical social clubs, and home demonstration clubs.

#### THE SCHOOL BUILDING FOR COMMUNITY USE

School buildings are used more for community purposes than other buildings, for school districts often determine neighborhood boundary lines. These buildings are built mainly for the education of children, but sometimes rooms in them are entirely suitable for other community uses. In many open-country neighborhoods school buildings are the only places to which people can go for activities, but open-country schoolhouses often are too small for these purposes.

Occasionally, a rural community is able to include a room or two for community use in the school building when it is planned, but this is only possible when a building is to be erected. In other places community rooms have been added later. These are usually financed by the people of the community and not through taxation. School buildings that have auditoriums with stage equipment or gymnasiums are commonly used for community purposes without interference with school work, but these are few in small communities.

In Williamsville, Sangamon County, Ill., a school and community building was built, with an auditorium, a community room with a seating capacity of 150, a kitchen, and the necessary classrooms. This community room was furnished by the local club, and no charge is made to any community group for its use. The auditorium, which seats 1,500, is used by the school for basketball and social functions, and by the community for the meetings of women's clubs, the farm bureau, 4-H Clubs, and other organizations. This building cost about \$93,000. It is controlled by the board of directors of the high school. (Illinois Station Circular 470, Rural Community Buildings.)

Some elementary school buildings are used for community purposes, particularly those that have rooms with stage equipment, and are large enough for community gatherings.

A large number of school gymnasiums with community-building arrangements have been built during the last few years. This trend appears in both small and large communities.

When Peshtigo, Wis., a town of 1,500 people, decided to build a gymnasium for its school the entire community became interested in this piece of work. As a result, the gymnasium that was originally planned for the school was finally also planned for community use, and it is now being used by many organizations. The gymnasium with its stage equipment and adjoining kitchen service, provides for athletics, dramatics, and many types of social functions. The building is controlled by the school board (fig. 7).

In many townships where there are no community buildings, the school building, even though very small, serves as a community center. In one school district where a small new schoolhouse was about to be built, its plan was revised at the suggestion of the organizations in the community to include a clubroom 24 by 32 feet, and a kitchen in the basement. This new room is satisfactory for both school and community use.

A new trend in school-building use seems to point toward a need for the planning of school buildings for many of the community activities, and planning for all the people—young and old—with the building used to its full capacity.

The Farm Security Administration that designed a number of combination schools and community buildings has considered this trend in its school-community building planning.

The Westmoreland Homesteads, a 250-family project, located 8 miles from Greensburg, Pa., is planned for immediate as well as for future development (fig. 8). Here an auditorium seating 500, adjoins the school building. This is to be used both by school children and adults. A home economics room with a well-equipped kitchen in the school building is to be used for community social functions. Nearby is the athletic field that is also for community use. The Westmore-



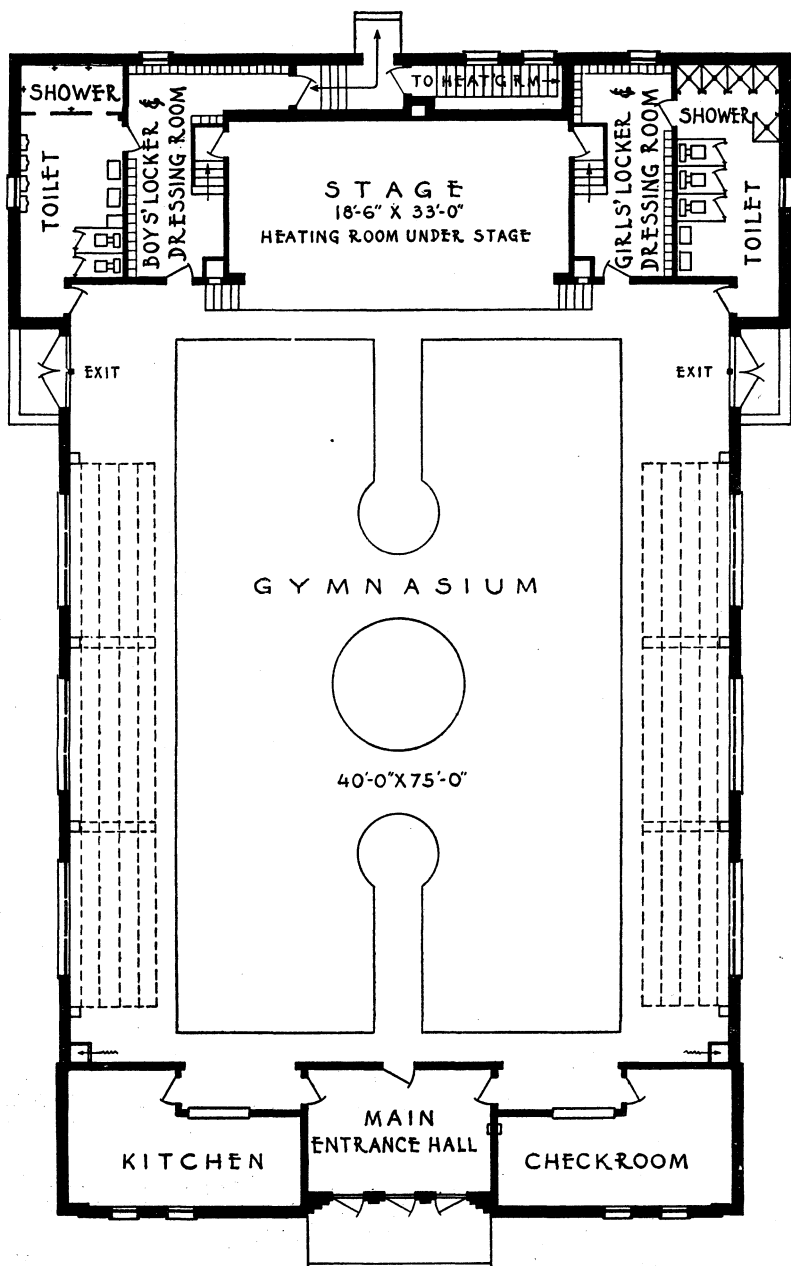


FIGURE 7.—Floor plan of the building at Peshtigo, Wis., showing gymnasium, auditorium, and kitchen. This one-story cinder-block building with concrete floor was built for \$19,800, heating, plumbing, wiring, and fixtures included.

land Homesteads are so laid out that there is plenty of ground for new buildings as they are needed, and all the main buildings are planned with future additions in mind.

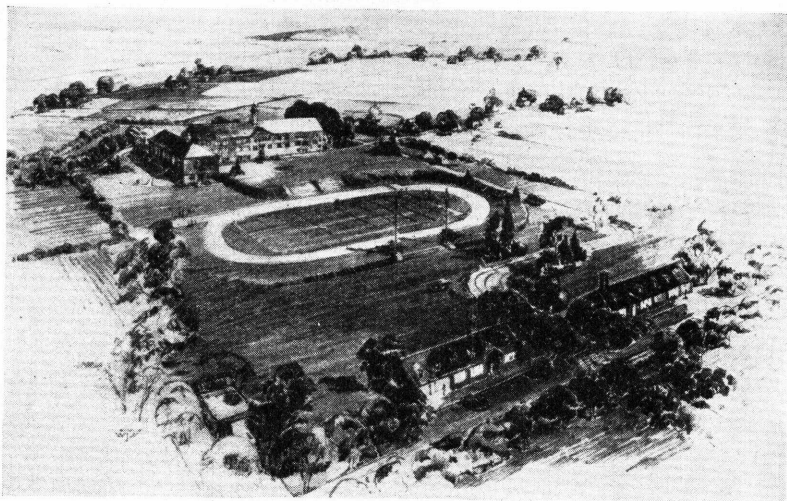


FIGURE 8.—Lay-out of the Westmoreland Homesteads, Greensburg, Pa., showing the school building in the background, with the auditorium at its left. In the right foreground is the general store, and at the left, a building for future business use. (By courtesy of the Special Plans Division, Farm Security Administration.)

At the Duluth Homesteads, located 7 miles from Duluth, Minn., a community center school building has also been designed. Here the community building is to be connected with the school building by a small library that can be entered through either building. The auditorium building has a large clubroom and kitchen. As at Westmoreland Homesteads, an athletic field is a part of the lay-out (figs. 9 and 10).

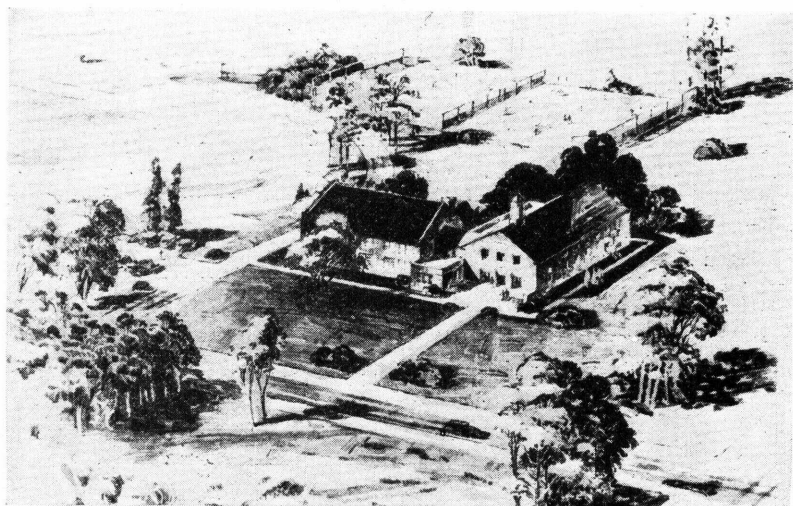


FIGURE 9.—Community-center lay-out, Duluth Homesteads, Duluth, Minn. The community building, at the right is connected with the school building, at left by a small library. (By courtesy of Special Plans Division, Farm Security Administration.)

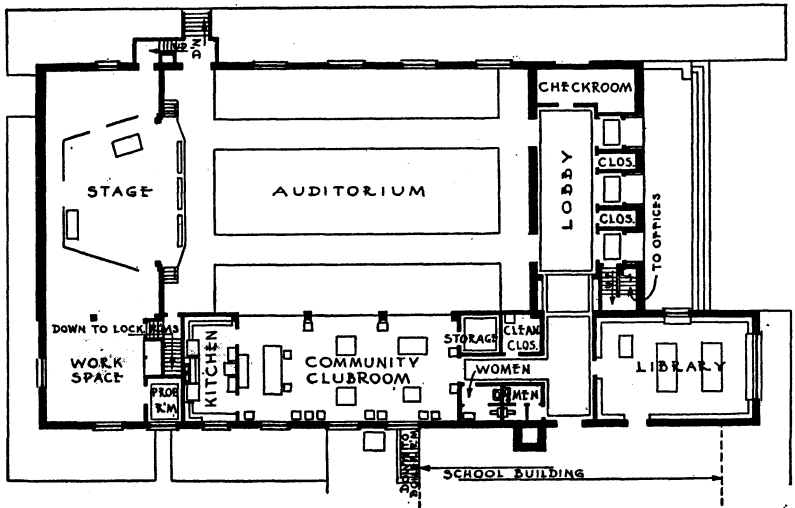


FIGURE 10.—The plan for the community building at Duluth Homesteads with clubroom and kitchen convenient for the use of both the school and the community. The library, located between the two buildings, can be easily reached from either building. (See fig. 9.)

The Newport News Homesteads, near Newport News, Va., built for 200 Negro families, has a school and community building. This is a T-shape building with the auditorium built from the center. It is so planned that new space may be easily added by building rear wings from the ends of the school building, but the courts are to be kept open.

Plum Bayou Homesteads, in Jefferson County, Ark., is a Farm Security Administration cotton-farming community planned for about 100 families. The farms are 40 acres each, and the whole tract covers about 5,000 acres. Its proposed lay-out is based on the expectation of extensive use of school buildings by all the people in the community; a number of the buildings are designed for use by both children and adults.

Some of the school buildings are also designed for community use. The shop, for instance, is planned for both student instruction and farm repair. The grade school has an auditorium and library for all the people. The high-school building is also to be used by adults. The lay-out includes a health center.

The homemaking and social-center building has many uses, and both women and school children can have every convenience and advice in homemaking and school projects. This building also has space for a nursery (fig. 11).

The shop, another double-purpose building, also planned and equipped for school and community, contains a wood shop, a metal shop, a finishing room, and a large assembly room. Farmers who use these rooms and tools may receive instruction in making farm repairs and improvements.

Whenever an entire community can be built from the ground up, as has been possible in the Farm Security Administration communities, new types of community planning following the trends of organizations and activities can be set up. The planning of school buildings for community use is one of the most conspicuous trends.

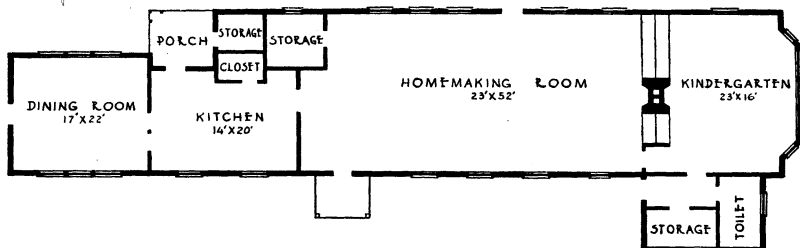


FIGURE 11.—The homemaking and social-center building at Plum Bayou Homesteads, Jefferson County, Ark. The building is planned for adults and children of all ages. The homemaking room is to be used as a homemaking school laboratory and as a place where the women of the community may obtain assistance in home projects. The kitchen is large enough for instruction and the serving of large social groups. It has the usual cabinet and sink arrangement as has also the homemaking room. Its location between the dining room and the homemaking room permits convenient service in both rooms. The hinged wall tables keep the room space free for many uses. The work porch is equipped with laundry tray and washing machine.

#### CHURCHES AS COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

Before communities thought very much about community buildings, meetings were held in whatever places were available—usually in homes, school buildings, and churches. As neighborhoods became larger and as organizations increased in size and number, more space was needed.

Most country churches are small and not very suitable for community activities; but in some places church organizations are large, and space has been planned for these meetings. Some of these churches serve as the only community building in the neighborhood.

The Shannondale Community House at Gladden, Mo., was designed mainly for religious and social uses; it is an outgrowth of community-church activities. Located on a high ridge in the Ozark Mountains, it is built of local stone. It was financed mainly by the Church Extension Board of the Evangelical Synod of North America, but some of the labor was donated by local people. Some funds were also supplied by the local church and interested persons.

Here community-church services are held on Sundays, and during the week groups that are interested in music, drama, hand work and weaving, and discussion hold their meetings. The folk school that meets in this building draws men and women from several counties. As the religious program is well adapted to the needs of the countryside, the minister has living quarters here.

The Shannondale Community House (fig. 12) appears to be a place where religious, educational, and social activities are closely related.

Another well-known type of church and community-building arrangement is that of the Latter Day Saints, commonly found in Utah. These buildings are frequently designed with a chapel that is used entirely for church purposes, and with a separate auditorium or amusement hall adjoining. There are several hundred of these chapel-community buildings in Utah. Rooms for church auxiliaries, Sunday-school classes, food service, and some of the community organizations are commonly included. The Latter Day Saints' church and community building is an outgrowth of the community work of the church that has been in progress for a long time. The chapel at Cedar City (fig. 13) serves about 1,100 members. It is used

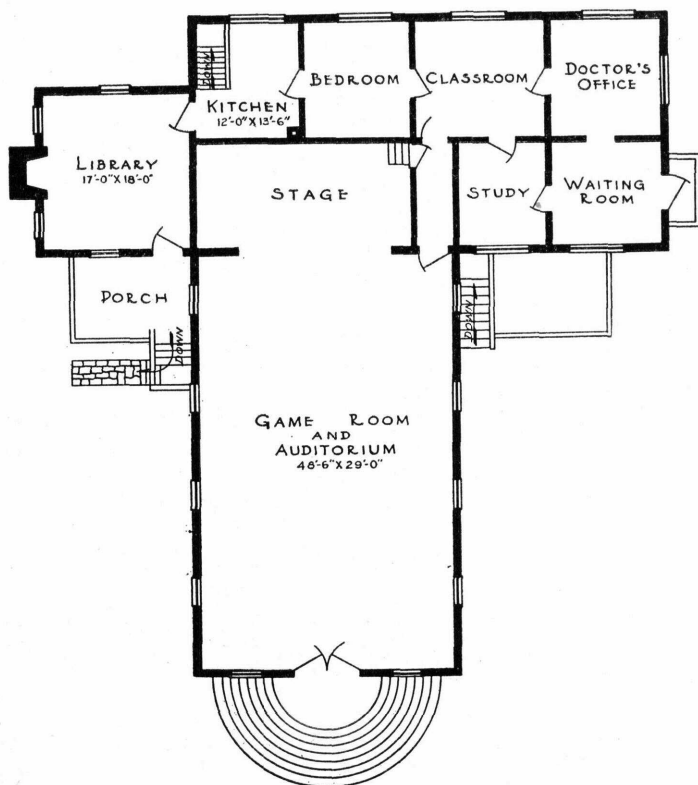


FIGURE 12.—The Shannondale Community House, at Gladden, Mo. This is an example of a church and community-center arrangement. Space is provided for church, social functions, folk-school classes, and the minister's living quarters. This building, constructed of native stone, cost \$9,000.



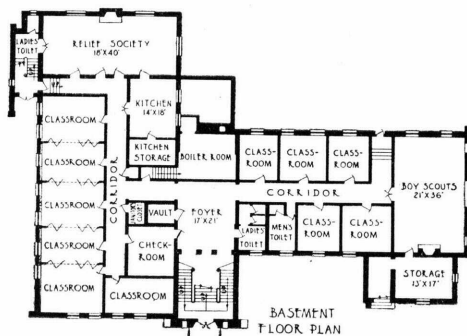
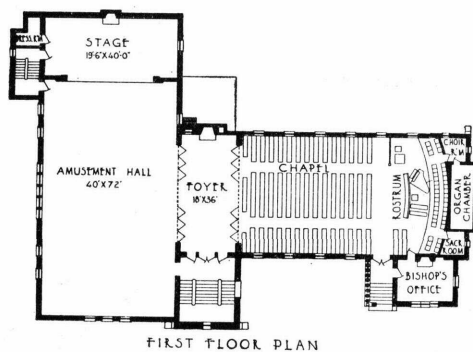
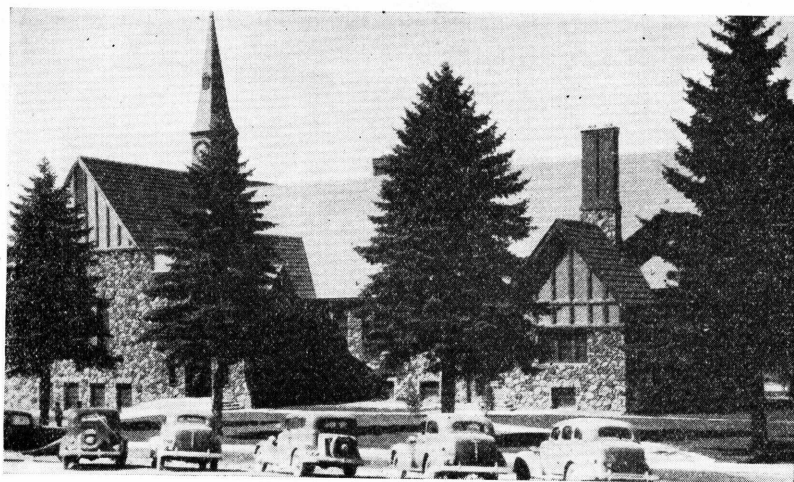


FIGURE 13.—Latter Day Saints Chapel and Amusement Hall, Cedar City, Utah. A typical arrangement with auditorium and stage connected with the main chapel by the church foyer. The ground floor provides for the church auxiliaries, food service, Sunday-school classrooms, and Boy Scouts' room.

for church services, theatricals, dances, banquets, lectures, religious group gatherings, and patriotic meetings. It is somewhat larger than the average chapel in Utah, but its arrangement is typical.

#### LIBRARIES WITH AUDITORIUMS AND CLUBROOMS

Many libraries have been built with some space for community activities. The Carnegie Libraries in Braddock, Homestead, and Duquesne, Pa., each have an athletic club, a theater, and classrooms, in addition to library space.

The Tracy Memorial Building, at New London, N. H., a gift to the community, was a fine old residence. It has been remodeled for library and community use. It contains a clubroom, space for food service, and a community hall. The women's clubs, 4-H Clubs, and the farm bureau all use it, and it is well known for its adult forum that is made up chiefly of farm families. The building is outstanding in the attractiveness of its furnishings and in its gardens (figs. 14 and 15).



FIGURE 14.—This old dwelling was remodeled into a library and community building and presented to New London, N. H., by one of the residents.

Many new libraries, particularly those in small communities, are being built with community rooms. Sequim, Wash., has a population of about 500 people and is surrounded by an agricultural and forest-working community. A well-designed library and recreation hall has recently been completed that serves as headquarters for the local library and as a meeting place for many civic and social groups. The building (fig. 16) was financed by the Works Progress Administration and the community. The Sequim Women's Club and the local American Legion post were active sponsors.

#### GRANGE HALLS

In some rural places Grange halls have become the center of community life. Often they are in constant use. As these halls usually





FIGURE 15.—A clubroom in the Tracy Memorial Building, at New London, N. H.

have auditoriums with stages, a well-equipped kitchen and dining space, and occasionally an additional room for juvenile Granges, they can easily be used by other organizations. Some of the recently built Grange halls include moving-picture booths and recreation equipment. In many of the small, rural places Grange halls have been inexpensively remodeled from abandoned rural churches and school buildings. The success of this remodeling depends on the design and structural condition of the old building. An inexpensive Grange hall, however, can often be made an attractive and useful community hall.

#### 4-H CLUB BUILDINGS

Buildings for 4-H Clubs have increased rapidly because of the needed space for their club activities. Many 4-H Club buildings are successfully planned as community buildings, for they are suitable for the use of other organizations. For this reason, 4-H Clubs are usually one of many organizations using a community building.

Other types of 4-H Club buildings designed for 4-H Club State camps have been built in a few States. On the Massachusetts State College campus is an attractive clubhouse, planned for 4-H Club members in connection with State camp work. It is also the meeting place for other groups (figs. 17 and 18).

A few States have State 4-H Club buildings chiefly financed by State legislatures. These are designed mainly for 4-H Club activities and exhibits, but they are used somewhat by other organizations. The Nebraska building is a successful example of this type. It cost about \$150,000 and provides for extensive demonstration and exhibit space.

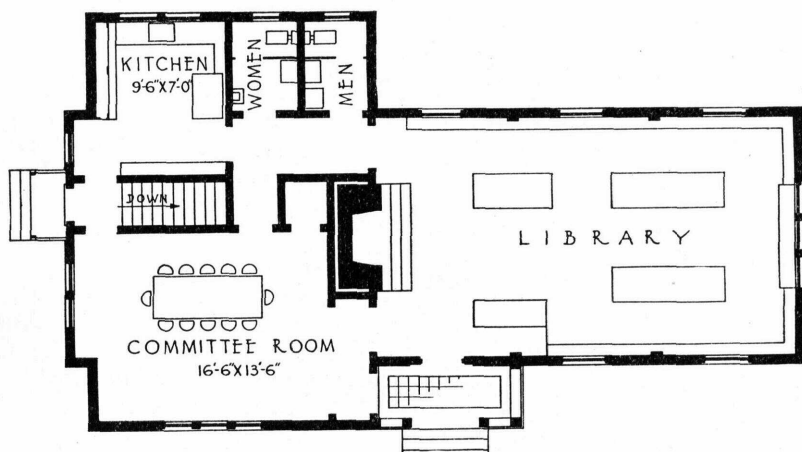
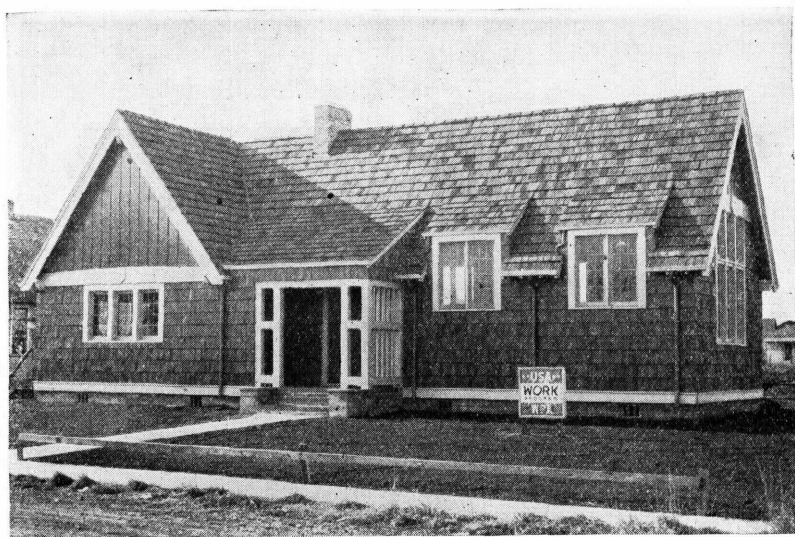


FIGURE 16.—An example of a well-designed library and community building that serves a very useful purpose in the little town of Sequim, Wash. The roof and walls are of hand-split, western red cedar shakes, and the interior is finished with native woods. Its cost was only \$6,792.

The building at Hutchinson, Kans., that was financed by the State, the Public Works Administration, and the Kansas State Fair, is another successful 4-H Club building. It has dining and kitchen service, dormitories, an auditorium, and exhibit space.



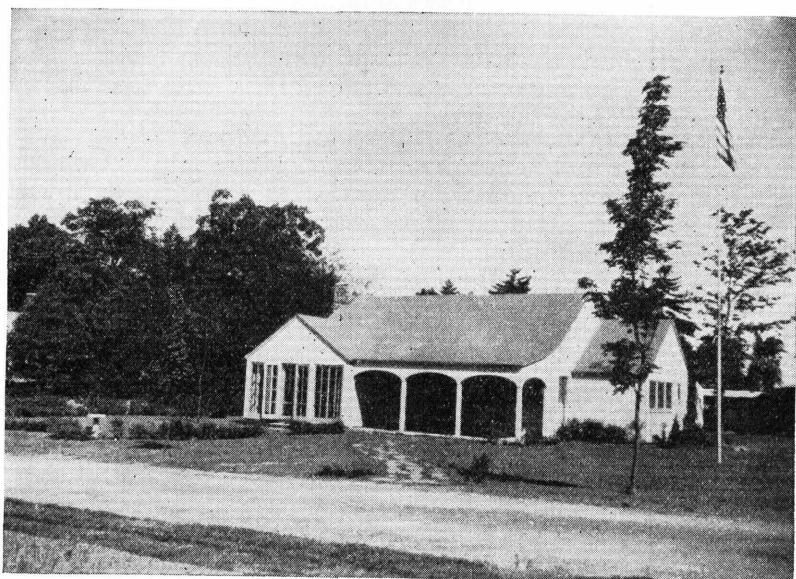


FIGURE 17.—The Farley 4-H Clubhouse, located on the Massachusetts State College Campus, is an example of well-designed and successfully planned building. The main hall, 26 by 40 feet has a stage, a fireplace, and a well-equipped kitchen adjoining. The building cost about \$4,000. The money was raised by club members and their friends.

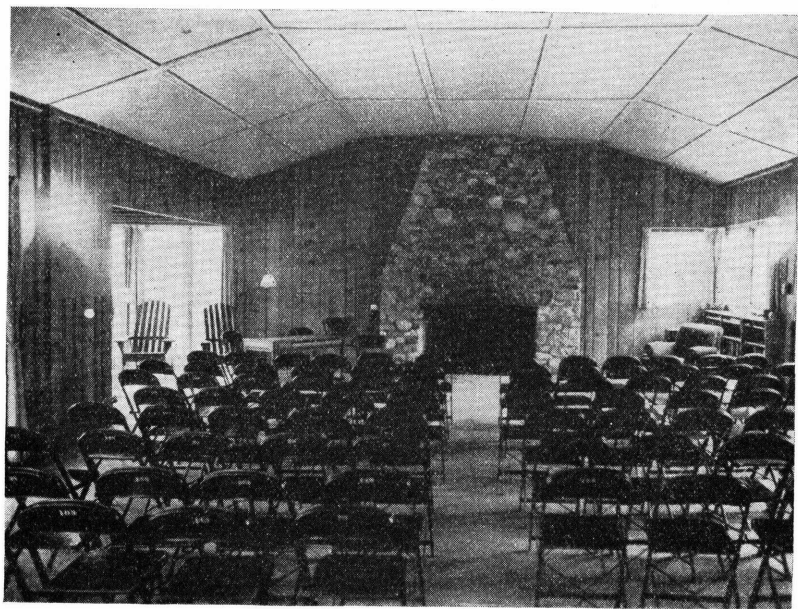


FIGURE 18.—The main room of the Farley Clubhouse becomes a pleasant auditorium.



## HOME BUREAUS, HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUBHOUSES, AND CANNING CENTERS

In some States, particularly in New York, home bureaus, where country women may meet for assistance and instruction in the work of the home, have been organized. Some of the buildings that house these organizations are used for both educational and social activities, and they serve as the community house for the locality. Others are designed mainly for home bureau work. These are usually financed by the bureau's funds.

Many home demonstration clubs have houses or rooms for home demonstration work. These are often small and simply designed and represent only a small expenditure. Some of these clubhouses are used for many community activities and serve as the only community house in a small, rural locality. County home demonstration agents have been responsible for much of this building program.

In Georgia the agricultural extension engineer has designed a very simple standard plan for these clubhouses that has been used extensively in that State (fig. 19). With small adaptations and necessary changes for types of sites, this plan seems to be most suitable if a very small building is desired. The size of the main room of the Georgia plan is frequently changed to meet local needs, and a porch has sometimes replaced the terrace (fig. 20).

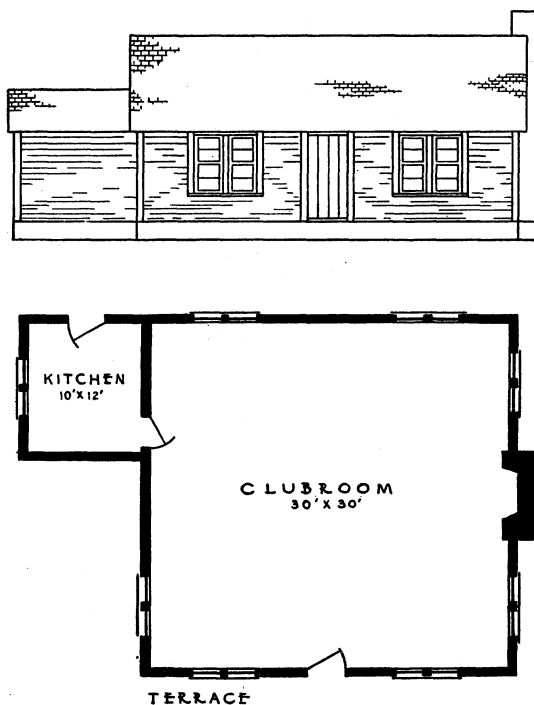


FIGURE 19.—Design for a very small clubhouse suggested by the Agricultural Extension Engineering Service, Georgia State College.

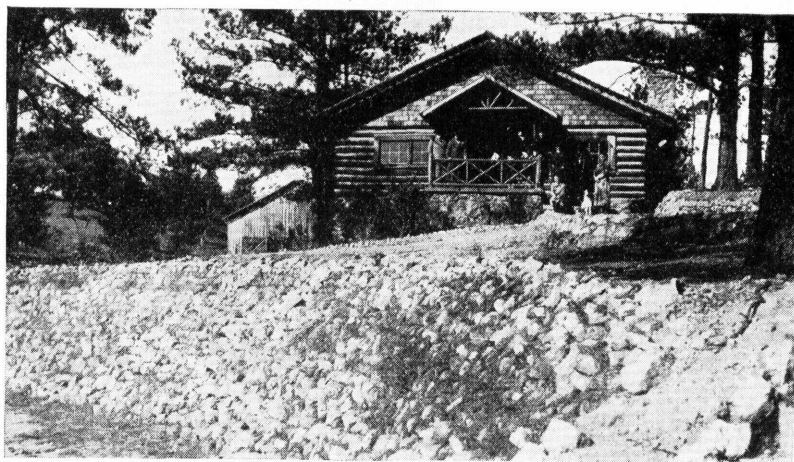


FIGURE 20.—One of the home-demonstration clubhouses of Polk County, Ga., adapted from the standard plan (fig. 19). This building of log-and-shingle construction was built with a cash outlay of only \$450. The lot and labor were donated. It is a good example of a simply designed building well placed on a hillside location.

In many country communities, canning centers have been set up. In some places the canning center has its own separate building that is used for this single purpose (fig. 21).

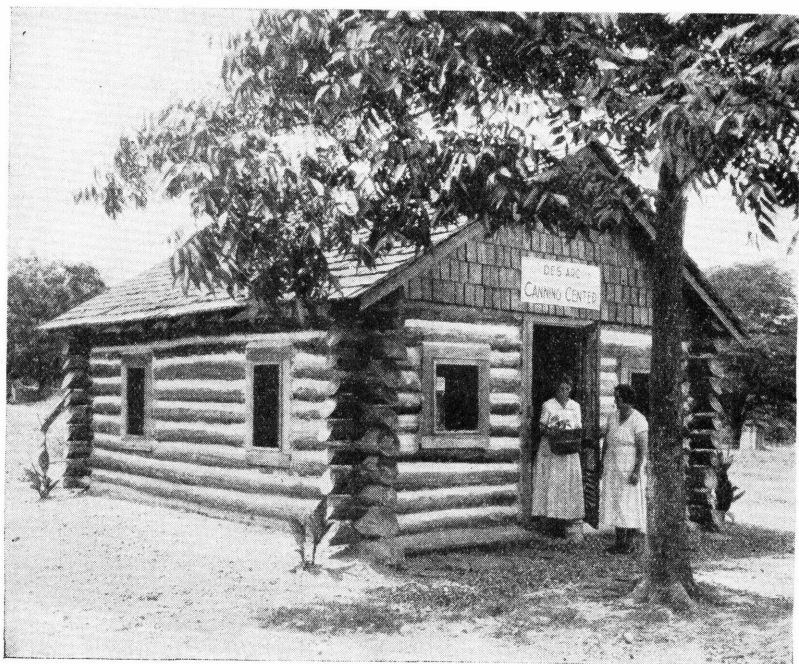


FIGURE 21.—Canning center at Des Arc, Ark., ready to be equipped. A very small building can be made very attractive.



Canning kitchens are planned also as part of community club-houses. When they are well planned, adequately equipped, and located conveniently for the people, they become of great economic value to farm families. Many of these very small centers are built inexpensively by using local materials (fig. 22). (For information regarding the lay-out and equipment of canning centers, see Community Canning Centers (mimeographed) U. S. Bureau of Home Economics.)

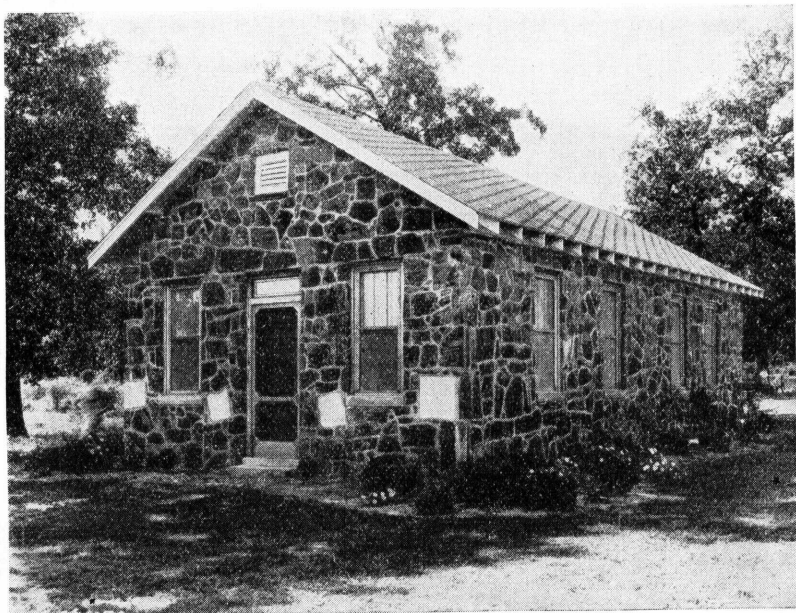


FIGURE 22.—The Adkins community center and canning kitchen, sponsored by the home demonstration club of Pope County, Ark., is an example of good design with the use of local materials.

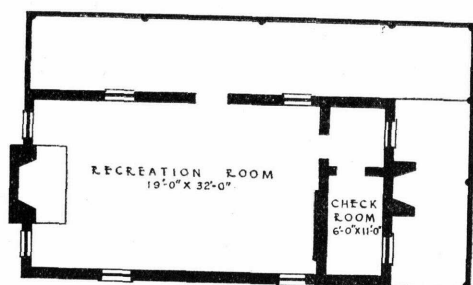
#### SHELTER HOUSES

Many shelter houses have been planned as part of the recreation facilities for a playground or pool. A few have included social rooms or clubrooms. These rooms are commonly used for handcraft, orchestra practice, and dramatic rehearsals. Some of these houses show the importance of good design and careful planning even in small buildings (fig. 23).

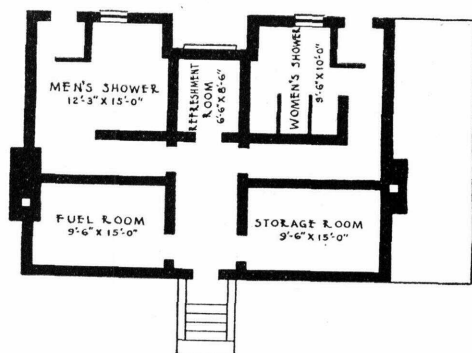
#### SPECIAL COMMUNITY BUILDINGS FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS

Community buildings that are designed for special types of projects are rarely suitable for exact duplication, but many of their features—type of building, room sizes, interior arrangement, and equipment—are worthy of consideration in other places.

Baxter Community, near Phoenix, Ariz., is a Farm Security Administration part-time farming community of about 35 families. A cooperative dairy, poultry, and truck farm is expected to provide food. In addition, each family has about one-fifth of an acre of land.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

FIGURE 23.—Community building and shelter house located at Stearns, Ky. It is well planned for local meetings and recreation and is supervised by the school board.



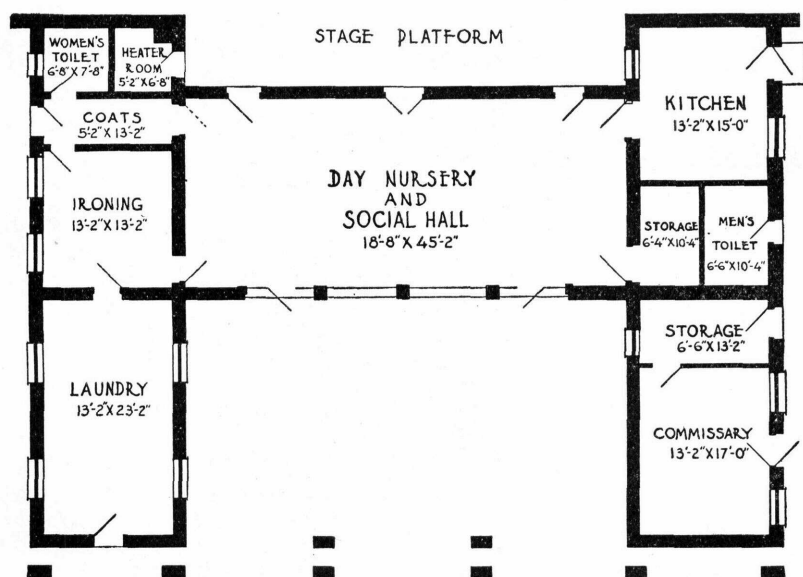
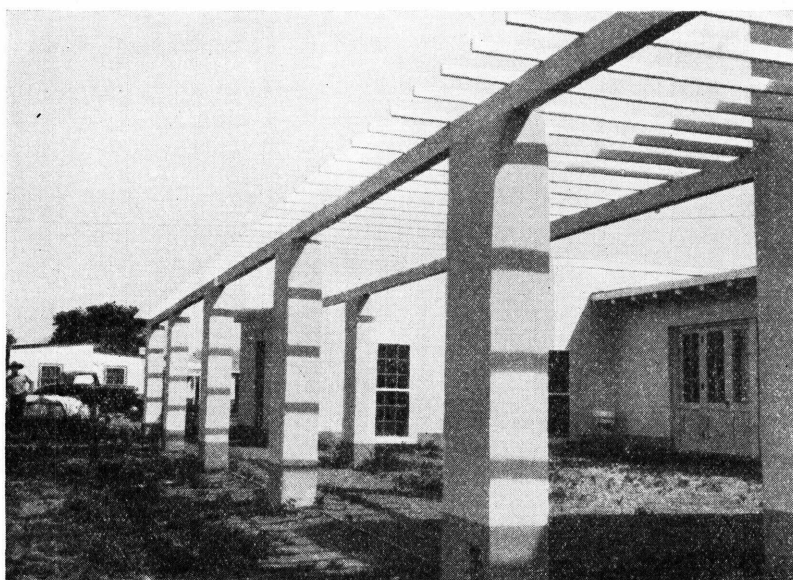


FIGURE 24.—The community building at Baxter Community, near Phoenix, Ariz., is of adobe walls with earth roof. It was erected by the Farm Security Administration. The commissary manages the food for cooperative farms, and the well-equipped laundry rooms and nursery are for the use of 60 families.

A community building has been planned for the 35 families of this project and for 25 additional families of the nearby Phoenix Homesteads. Unusual features in this building are the commissary for the produce of the cooperative farm and the well-equipped laundry rooms. The houses for the families are small, and having the laundry rooms in the community building means that more space is available for other uses in the homes. This arrangement also gives families far better laundry equipment than they would be able to buy for themselves (figs. 24 and 25).

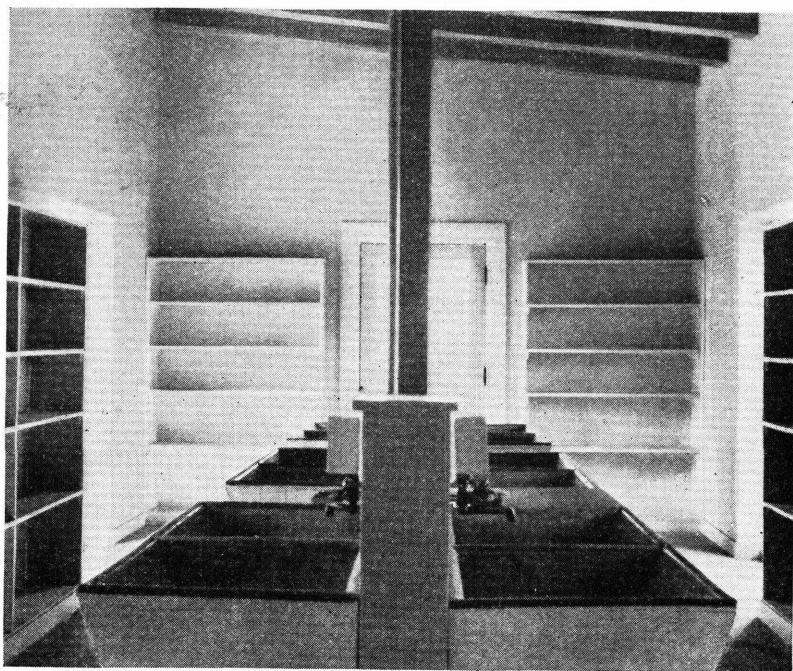


FIGURE 25.—The laundry room in the Baxter Community Building is generously equipped with trays and built-in shelves. The ironing room adjoins it.

When the town of Norris, Tenn., was planned, a community house was built for the thousand or more workers on the dam and the people of the village of Norris. Now the building is used successfully by the townspeople. Its room sizes and arrangements, its window and door placements, and its auditorium and stage, are of interest to those planning to build. It cost about \$35,000 (fig. 26).

These community buildings in Tennessee Valley Authority camps, although required only for a few years during the construction of the dams, may be of interest to people in many small places. They show how activities can be successfully combined. The building for the Hiwassee Dam in North Carolina has a combination gymnasium-auditorium, a lounge, a library, a four-room school, a fire-truck room, police headquarters, a post office, a barber shop, a commissary, rest rooms, and several offices—all under the same roof. Space for these activities may be needed in almost any small community.



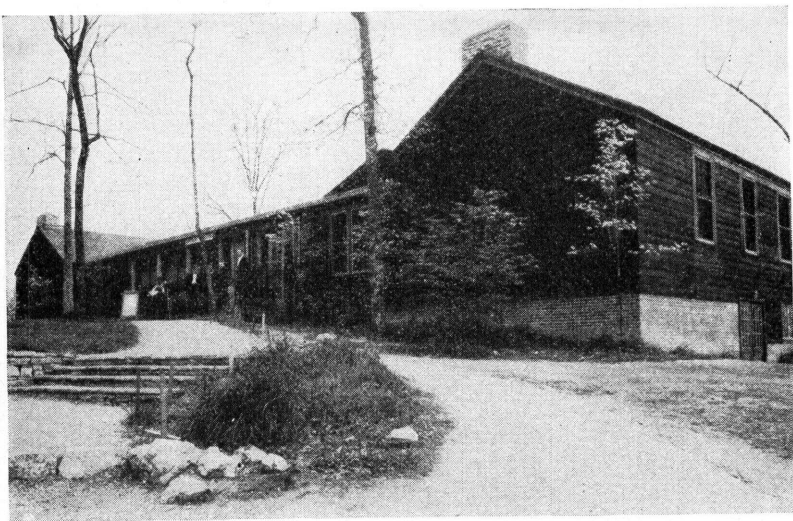


FIGURE 26.—The community building at Norris, Tenn. Originally designed for 1,000 or more workers, it provides for the business and social activities required in any small community. It has a large auditorium and stage, a kitchen and dining space including a soda counter, ample lounge space, a beauty parlor, and a barber shop.

#### INEXPENSIVE BUILDINGS

To be useful, community buildings need not be costly. Many small, inexpensive ones serve great needs. The people themselves have definitely wanted them and they have obtained them. They have paid for them dollar by dollar. They like using the buildings when they are completed.

Many little buildings that have a great many uses have been started with but a very few dollars—sometimes less than a hundred—for this has been all that the community could get together. Some of them have been completed through an earn-as-you-build program, going on year after year, with each small sum used to make the community house more comfortable, more beautiful.

The Eleven Points Community at Riverton, Oregon County, Mo., is a truly rural community, for it is located 5 miles from a church and 14 miles from the nearest town. The Eleven Points Club decided that a church and community building was greatly needed. During 1934 the club raised only \$89, but on the strength of this sum they began work on the building. The site was donated, the cornerstone was laid and labor and some materials were given. In 1935 a native-stone building 28 by 40 feet was dedicated. Now that the building is complete, church services are held, the Sunday School attendance has doubled, a singing school has been organized, 4-H Clubs have been sponsored, and many social gatherings are held there. This building has become a real social center.

Many of these undertakings have been successfully carried through with very small amounts of money but with great enthusiasm and complete cooperation.

The following illustrations (figs. 27–29) are examples of successful but inexpensive community buildings.

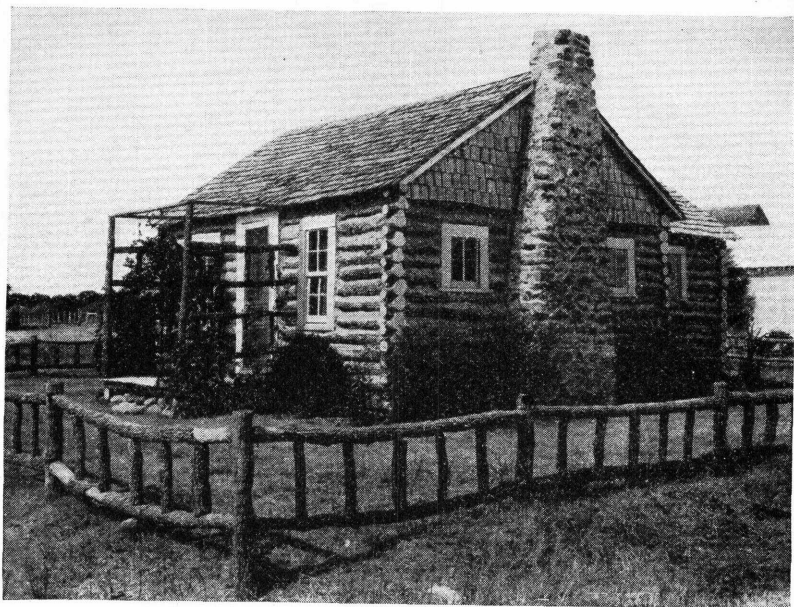


FIGURE 27.—The clubhouse at Kaufman County, Tex., is a good example of native materials attractively used in a small, inexpensive building. It has a clubroom 16 by 20 feet and a kitchen 12 by 14 feet. The women of the community raised the funds, and the men gave the labor. The cash outlay was only \$100.

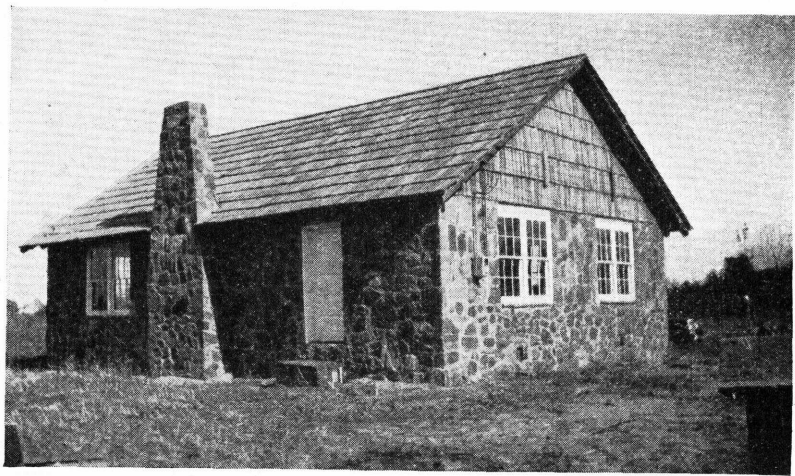


FIGURE 28.—There was only \$675 available to build this native stone and shingle community house at Rose City, Pulaski County, Ark. This fund was raised by the home demonstration club. A local bank gave the site. Some material came from an abandoned church; some was donated. Men and boys cut logs for rafters, hauled rock, and salvaged the materials from the old church. The main room is 30 by 40 feet, and the plan calls for two additional rooms—one an auditorium with stage.



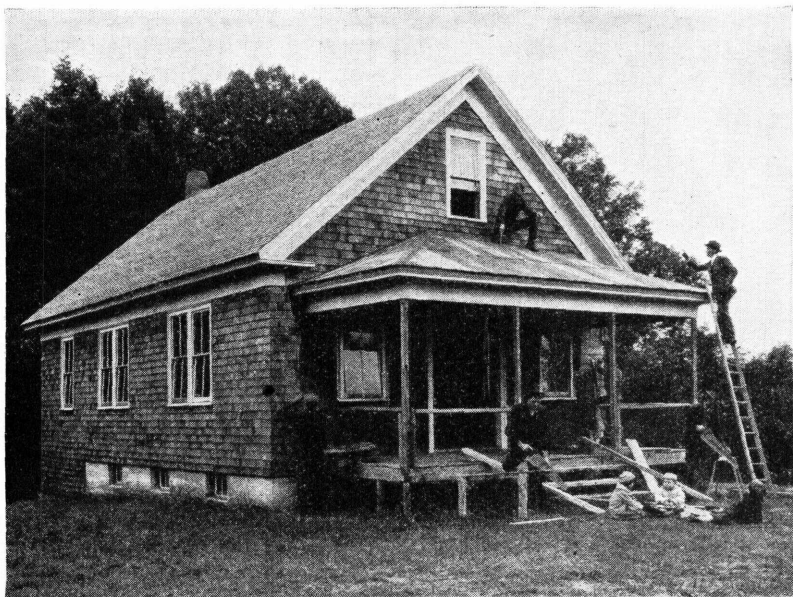


FIGURE 29.—Community house at Province Road, Belknap County, N. H. The locality in which this community house is situated has only a few families, but these families had no meeting place, no Grange hall. One evening the neighbors decided to build a community house; and the morning after, they had started work on it. The lot was donated; the school board gave an abandoned furnace; the maple flooring came from a local maple orchard; and the pine for the walls was given by wood-lot owners. Much of the labor was volunteer. The building has an auditorium and stage on the first floor and a kitchen and dining room in the basement. It is used mainly by the Grange.

#### WHAT TYPE OF BUILDING DOES A COMMUNITY NEED?

Before a community undertakes to plan or to build a community house, it should study community needs, for both replanning and duplication of space are costly. What organizations already have buildings or rooms that are satisfactory? Which activities can be combined? Can business and social groups be housed under the same roof, and how much space will they require? Do many of the people want ready-made amusements in the nearest large town instead of home diversions with home people? To what extent will the little country community content itself with itself, if the social interests of the people can find expression at home? As not all community buildings have been successful, serious consideration should be given to the building project before it is carried through. The most successful community buildings—those most used and most enjoyed—are the ones really required to house activities.

A careful study of the community's needs is sure to mean money saved, or at least money wisely spent. An auditorium, for instance, can be planned for many groups and many activities. It may be a lecture room, a moving-picture theater, a banquet room, a gymnasium, a dance hall, and if it is cleverly planned, its space may be divided for intimate small groups. There is good economy in planning each room for many uses, so in listing a community's needs it is always well to make the space in a single room useful for many purposes. Make every cubic foot of the building work full time.

## THE COST

Few communities can afford to build as large a building as they want. The perfect building usually costs too much. In estimating the money required for a new building, future needs should always be considered, for there is little economy in cutting down the cost of the original unit to the extent that new, expensive additions must be added within a year or two. Inferior-quality building materials are not economical, for replacements and repair may also be costly.

After the community's needs are finally decided, and a conclusion is reached on the space required, any builder can give a rough estimate of the cost, if he has a sketch plan of the lay-out and some idea of the materials to be used. It is never worth while to plan on the cost of the building being less than the estimate. It is usually more, for extra needs creep in at the last minute. A contingency fund should be provided for these extras.

Buildings are usually estimated on cubic-foot cost, but estimates can also be made on square-foot cost.

The University of Arkansas estimated the square-foot cost of community buildings in Arkansas in 1935 at \$1 a square foot of floor space, provided a large proportion of native materials were used. (Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 322, Rural Community Building Plans.)

Only suggestive costs can be obtained from comparisons of costs of buildings in other places as there is such a difference between localities in material and labor costs, the amount and type of equipment, interior finish, and other items. But a general idea of the probable cost can be obtained.

The town hall and community building at Stanwood, Wash., completed in 1936, is a concrete, one-story structure, 62 by 72 feet, that cost about \$18,000, exclusive of the site (exterior and plan, fig. 1).

A brick-and-tile, one-story building 55 by 115 feet has just been built in Pittsville, Wis., for \$30,000, exclusive of the site.

The one-story, stone community building at Fort Stockton, Tex., built in 1936, with over-all dimensions 49 by 61 feet, cost about \$10,000—materials about \$5,500, and labor about \$4,600 (exterior and plan, fig. 5).

The large, many-use, one-story frame building designed by Tennessee Valley Authority and built in 1934, cost about \$35,000, exclusive of the site (fig. 26).

Many very small clubhouses and community buildings built recently cost less than \$1,500 and many others less than \$1,000, including the value of donated labor and materials (figs. 20, 27, and 28).

The Henshaw Homemakers' Club, Henshaw, Ky., is building a log community building 20 by 50 feet that is expected to cost \$750. The lot was donated.

A one-story, two-room, log-and-shingle building in Polk County, Ga., having a main room 29 by 29 feet and a kitchen 12 by 14 feet, was built recently for about \$950—materials cost \$450 and the value of the donated labor was about \$500 (figs. 19 and 20).

## WHO PAYS THE COST?

There are a number of ways to finance community buildings, any one of which may be successful. Usually, the buildings are financed by a combination of methods. The most common methods are here outlined.

(1) *Taxation.*—In some places funds are obtained through taxation. This method is commonly used when community buildings are combined with school buildings. Some township governments finance both the capital and operating cost of the community building. The usual procedure, under the taxation method of financing, is to submit the proposition to the vote of the people and then, if the vote is favorable, borrow the money by issuing bonds.

(2) *Individual gifts.*—In a few communities individuals have given buildings for community use. Such instances are uncommon.

(3) *Community sponsors and the Works Progress Administration.*—A great many community buildings have been built lately through funds provided by the Works Progress Administration for relief labor, combined with community funds. Some very useful buildings have resulted. Since the Works Progress Administration is a temporary organization, its future financing of structures is doubtful.

(4) *Sale of stock.*—Some communities have organized stock companies to finance community buildings. Stock is issued in small-amount certificates, sometimes as small as \$5 each. These are sold to individuals. Usually the amount sold to each person is limited in order to distribute the cost and spread the ownership among many people. This method of financing, through small-amount stock certificates, usually is very successful and results in community-wide interest in the building.

(5) *Donations of money or labor by the people of the community.*—Many small community buildings and some large ones are financed entirely by the people themselves, all families giving or working in one way or another to pay costs. When people pay they feel that they own. Usually some club takes the initiative and raises funds through entertainments. Donations in cash or labor, or both, are also made, or private subscriptions are solicited. If subscription funds are not adequate, a loan is frequently made by some community organization. Some of these small buildings have been started with a very small cash outlay, sometimes as little as \$100.

Buildings used by special groups such as the Grange, churches, and various types of clubs, are financed chiefly through their memberships and through funds raised by entertainments. Most Grange halls, for instance, are financed through funds from entertainments and donations. The remainder of the debt, if there is one, is taken care of in the form of a loan made by an officer of the Grange to the Association.

Some clubs build one unit of the building and add to it as funds permit. That is the way the club at Rose City, Ark., succeeded in getting a building.

#### LOCATION OF THE BUILDING AND SIZE AND TYPE OF BUILDING SITE

Where a community building is to be located will depend on the type of neighborhood in which it is to be built—farm and village or open country. Whatever the location, it should be easily reached by all the people; hence in many neighborhoods, road conditions will affect the location.

A great many community-building sites have been donated by individuals, civic groups, or business organizations. In such instances the location and type of site may not always be the choice of the community, but it may be the one way to get a community building started.

The size of the site will depend on the location and the type of center desired. If a community building is in a village, and it is to be used by both village and open-country organizations, for civic, social, and recreational purposes, the site probably cannot be large.

In Montana, where a study of community buildings has been made, 17 of 39 were on sites less than 1 acre in size, and 32 of the 39 had sites less than 5 acres in size.

If it is possible for the community building to be so located that plenty of ground is available, such features as tennis courts, a baseball diamond, horseshoe-pitching courts, a playground and wading pool, picnic grounds, and an outdoor theater can be provided. Two of these features—the outdoor theater and picnic grounds—have been increasingly used in country neighborhoods, and they are greatly appreciated in many places. Outdoor theaters for plays, concerts, motion pictures, lectures, and all types of festivals can create educational interest (fig. 30).

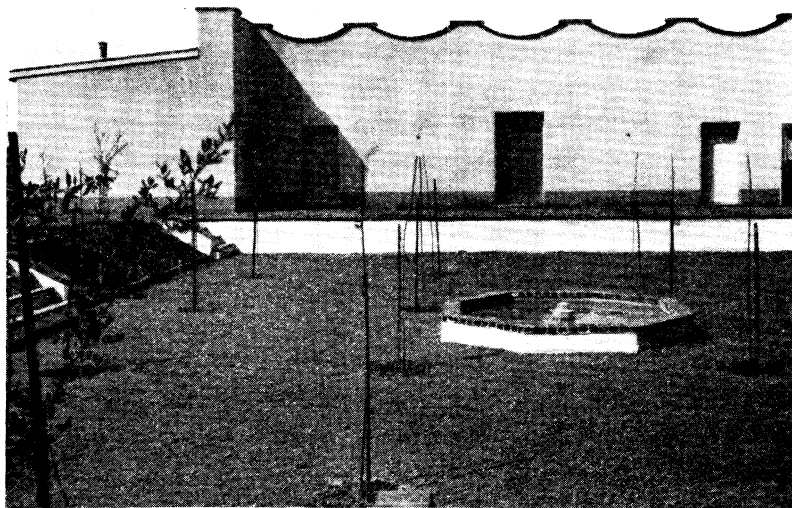


FIGURE 30. A small outdoor stage for open air meetings and entertainments is part of the Baxter Community building, Phoenix, Ariz.

If a large site is selected, the lay-out should be planned for future development, because large areas usually mean a build-as-you-can program with development as money permits. These large sites sometimes require 15 to 20 acres, if picnic grounds and athletic fields are included.



Whatever the size of the site, all natural beauty should be kept and not only used, but featured (fig. 31). If a hillside site is selected, attractive results may be obtained by carefully planning the building for the particular site, by terracing, and appropriate planting.

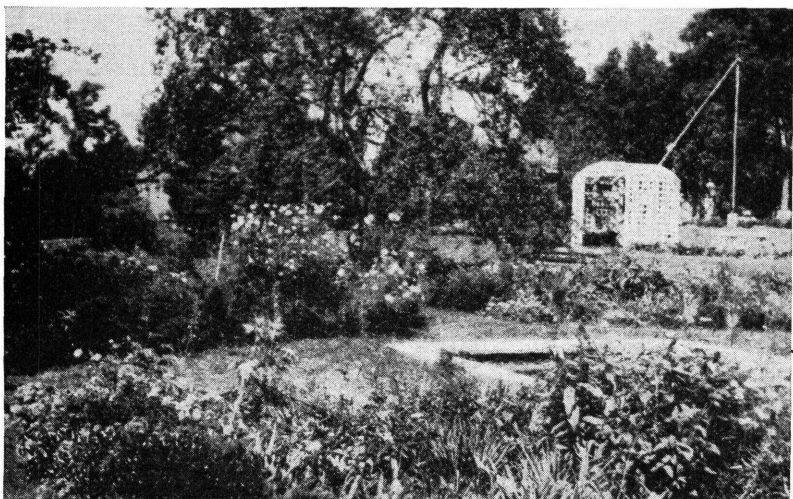


FIGURE 31.—An attractive garden adds to the beauty and use of a community house.  
(The Tracy Memorial Building, New London, N. H.)

A landscape plan for the grounds is important, for good landscaping adds to both the attractiveness and the use of the building. The out of doors is much more used for activities than it once was—for dramatics, lectures, music, dining, and many other purposes. It is usually good economy to employ a landscape architect to make the plan, but the development may be carried on from year to year by the people themselves with a little guidance. (For information on landscape plans for grounds of community buildings, see Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station Circular 470, Rural Community Buildings.)

#### ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

A building need not be large or costly to be of good architecture, for some very small buildings are very well designed. Simplicity usually is the keynote to good design, for a simple building in good proportion is always more beautiful and more satisfactory than one with meaningless detail. When a community building is to be built it should conform to the architecture of the vicinity, and it should be in keeping with well-designed, nearby buildings.

An attractive building is always more valuable than an ugly one. Good proportion and good line in building costs no more than the lack of it, and the result is satisfying to everyone (fig. 1).

Common mistakes in buildings are the improper placement of the building on the site or the design of a building that does not suit its site. They occur most frequently in the use of irregular-shape lots, hillside, or sloping lots.

Many community houses are built of native materials because these are usually cheaper. With careful designing and study of the site and surrounding locality, these materials can be used most effectively and most attractively (figs. 2, 4, 6, 12, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, and 28).

A community building of even moderate cost should be designed by a competent architect, for a good architect usually saves the people money and makes the building more valuable and useful.

#### CONSIDERATIONS IN PLANNING

The first step in planning is to decide on the community's needs. Are there satisfactory rooms, or buildings, or both, that are in use for some of the community's activities, and will they continue to be satisfactory? What uses and activities must be provided for at once in the building, and what are the probable future needs? It is always best to plan a building around the needs for which it is to be used, instead of attempting to fit the needs into the building after it is completed.

No building committee or architect can anticipate all future needs and uses, so the plan must be flexible. Most community buildings should be planned for future additions that can be easily and inexpensively made. If a many-use building is to be designed, a plan for all the community—old and young, men and women—is necessary; and it is good economy to make each room serve as many purposes as possible and make all the equipment useful.

There are no standard plans that will be entirely satisfactory for any given community, for needs differ in each place, and locations and sites differ. The plans of other buildings will suggest desirable arrangements, room sizes, and uses of materials. A particular unit, such as an auditorium, gymnasium, or clubroom, might be successfully copied from another building. It is important then for the planning committee to visit other community buildings of good design in the area.

#### THE ROOMS

Sizes and designs of rooms will depend somewhat on the number of people that will use them and the variety of uses. They will also depend on the money that is available. Since building is costly, all space should be used as much of the time as possible.

An auditorium, for instance, will probably serve for lectures, dinners, dances, and other social functions. It may be used as a gymnasium. Its size must be adjusted to the number of people that will use it and their activities. Six or seven square feet per person is usually allowed for seating arrangements. Dining space requires more area per person, depending on the size of the tables used. Usually 9 or 10 square feet per person is adequate. Many buildings now have moving-picture projection booths and sound apparatus. Most auditoriums have stages, and these require storage space for scenery, dressing rooms, and adequate exits. The movable stage that can be placed in the center of the room, at its ends, or sides has been very satisfactory where it has been used.

A gymnasium-auditorium will usually require more space than an auditorium. Such a building recently planned in a town of about

1,100 has outside dimensions of 66 by 114 feet. Its auditorium and gymnasium space is 40 by 75 feet, with a stage 18 by 36 feet. Bleachers that seat 600 are provided at the sides of the room.

Clubrooms will also vary in size according to the use to be made of them. Some space should be provided for quiet and passive games. Small library rooms are often used for club purposes.

Kitchens in rural community buildings, particularly those located in the open country, are usually planned for canning purposes as well as for food service for social functions. If a canning kitchen is to be used, a space 14 by 20 feet will permit as many as six persons to work effectively. It will also be large enough to serve moderately large groups. If the kitchen can be placed between the auditorium and a smaller room it will provide easy food service for both rooms or for small and large groups.

If rest rooms for the use of country people while carrying on their business in town are needed, there should be some arrangement for food service, comfortable chairs and couches, and preferably a small library and writing room.

Many satisfactory small clubhouses, some with only two rooms—an assembly room, 30 by 30 feet and a kitchen large enough in which to do canning—have been built at small costs (figs. 19 and 20).

Resident-type clubhouses with a main room, one or two clubrooms, and kitchen space also meet the needs of many rural communities (fig. 32).

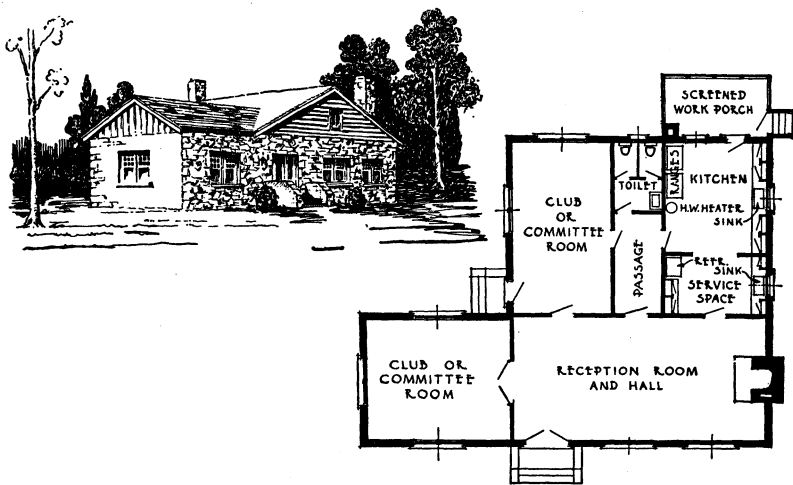


FIGURE 32.—A clubhouse 24 by 36 feet with a wing 18 by 20 feet. The kitchen is sufficiently large for doing some canning. The building contains about 1,220 square feet. (From Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 322, Rural Community Buildings.)

#### FIRE-PROTECTION AND BUILDING-CODE REGULATIONS

Whenever a building is planned for large or moderately large meetings or groups of people, protection against fire and other building hazards are necessary. Only a few States have building codes, but safety regulations, requirements for sanitation, and ventilation, usually exist. In some places any building that has a stage and curtain is



classified under the theater regulations for safety. The requirements of the States differ. When a community building is to be built, plans for the building should be submitted to the proper State authorities for approval if local ordinances for safety regulation do not exist.

### REMODELING OLD BUILDINGS

Many abandoned schoolhouses and some churches have been remodeled into successful community buildings. Others have been unsatisfactory because of one or more of the following difficulties: (1) The location could not be easily reached by all the people. (2) The architectural design and plan of the building could not be inexpensively adapted to changing needs. (3) Too much new construction would be necessary to warrant the cost of remodeling.

Many old buildings have been remodeled that are structurally sound but are architecturally ugly. If the proportions and the main lines of the building are good, remodeling may be satisfactory, for often unattractiveness is caused by a few details that can be eliminated. A community cannot afford ugly design, for the building is for the approval and benefit of all of the people; and other communities also may select it as a model.

Some of the old rectangular schoolhouses and churches with good lines, originally well built and still well preserved, have been successfully converted into small community buildings. In a few instances, a stage, partitions, and equipment have been the only essentials added (fig. 33). Sometimes it has been necessary to put in central heating, to partition off a kitchen, and provide storage space.

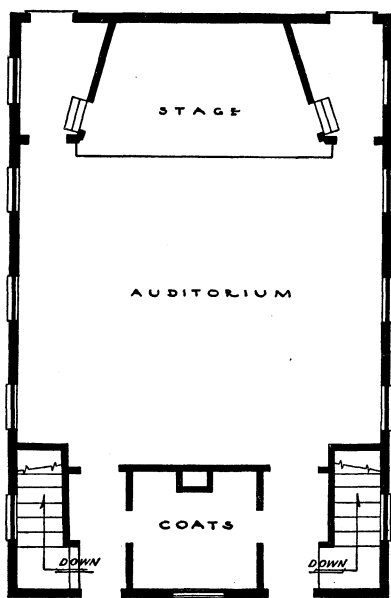


FIGURE 33.—Plan for converting a church into a community building. Seats have been removed, and the stage replaces the pulpit space. (From Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station Circular 470, Rural Community Buildings).

The clubhouse at Rose City, Ark., was built from the stone of an abandoned church. In this instance materials only were salvaged.

Success in remodeling depends on a careful study of the expenditures necessary to make the old building useful and attractive, for sometimes a remodeled building costs more than a new one, and usually it is not so satisfactory.

#### THE FURNISHINGS

Frequently too little consideration is given to the need for furnishings that are both useful and attractive. Attractiveness does not cost very much, and no one knows how high its dividends are (fig. 34).



FIGURE 34.—Careful selection of furniture brings satisfying results. (Tracy Memorial Building, New London, N. H.)

As a community building is the people's building, the furnishings in it have influenced the home interiors of many communities. Pieces of furniture are copied, materials are duplicated, and color schemes are imitated. Furniture need not be costly to be useful and interesting. Cast-off pieces repaired and refinished can sometimes be made satisfactory and attractive.

In many communities the people have made many of the pieces of furniture. Furniture making is often a club project. Such a project has many advantages. The furniture can be made very attractive, it is cheaper, and it contributes to the well-being of the entire community (fig. 35).

It is often difficult to make large rooms attractive and to furnish them to serve small groups, as well as large. This can be done through skill in furnishing and arrangements. Assembly rooms need not be cheerless (fig. 36).

Community buildings are not often completely furnished at one time. There usually is not enough money. The common method is to buy the essentials, and then add pieces as funds permit. Many



FIGURE 35.—Useful and attractive furniture for community houses can be made as well as bought. These pieces were constructed by workers of the Works Progress Administration at Camp Ocala, Fla.



FIGURE 36.—This interior in the Millen, Ga., community building shows desirable furnishings for a large room. The exterior of this building is an example of good architectural treatment of a one-story frame building that cost \$9,000 (cover illustration).



clubs have been responsible for the furnishing of community buildings, and these projects usually continue over several years. Whatever the method, the aim should be to satisfy the people who use the building.

#### ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Many community buildings have failed because of lack of management and proper administration. Every building, no matter how small, will require an organization to define its policy in reference to building uses, rentals if any, care and upkeep, hours, and other regulations.

Community buildings are usually controlled by the group that finances them. If this is a club or some other association, a board of directors is usually elected from the group to determine the policy. This board appoints its own officers. In some places a house manager or a committee is appointed to supervise the building. The title to the building usually remains with the financing groups.

School and community buildings are usually under the management of the school board or a board of directors.

When a building is given to a community by an individual for community use, a board of directors or trustees is usually appointed to control it. The title to the building, in most instances, remains with the individual.

Sometimes a building is financed through the sale of stock. In such instances, the association sponsoring the financing usually incorporates under the laws of the State. To do so is a convenience in holding property.

The constitution and bylaws for the operation of these buildings differ greatly, depending on the financing method and the size of the community. Usually a constitution defines the objectives of the organization and prescribes such items as the duties of the officers, types of membership, and voting privileges.

Good management can overcome the difficulties that arise in building uses and that arise because of friction between groups. Difficulties so serious that they have closed down buildings have sometimes arisen over uses of buildings. Uses by young groups have caused many of these difficulties. An adequate and clear definition of uses when the building is first opened should prevent such misunderstandings. If the management has a well-located, well-designed building to operate and takes advantage of the experience of others, it can make the building one that all the people will use.

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